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Editor's Note

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INQUIRY

THE JOURNAL OF THE VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
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EDITOR'S NOTE

One of my favorite memes is derived from the award-winning sitcom 30 Rock. The protagonist Liz Lemon, the perpetually swamped head writer and showrunner, notes the hectic nature of her work environment to her boss and mentor Jack Donaghy: "What a week, huh?" Donaghy replies, "Lemon, it's Wednesday."

It is a great meme because we have all been there. I am sure that everyone can relate to that feeling many times over the past year. Every colleague that I have spoken to has shared feelings of being overwhelmed, stressed out, and exhausted as the line between home and work environment blurred in our shift to remote learning. But what also emerged in all of those conversations is how important it was to embrace the challenge. Putting students first and striving for equity no matter the circumstances might result in a heavier workload and emotional labor, but VCCS faculty, staff, and administrators understand this responsibility. Like Liz Lemon, we're prepared to work exceptionally hard to meet our goal of student success, even if it means wondering which day of the week it is.

The timing of this issue is ideal. We are publishing this themed collection of scholarship on meeting students' academic and mental health needs just weeks away from the implementation of the new VCCS strategic plan Opportunity 2027, which foregrounds achieving equity and identifying various students' needs to succeed in our community colleges. The exceptional scholars featured here conducted in-depth studies and thoroughly researched exigent issues to develop and further conversations in higher education about student learning.

In her study, Andrea Palmisano examines what personality traits can tell us about the academic needs of nontraditional students. Returning author Zachary Beamer takes a qualitative approach to how instructors can meet students' needs in corequisite mathematics courses. Laura E. Martin and Lynn Bohecker investigate mental health needs in their study of coping and stress associated with suicide risk in community college students. Laura Fuller provides an in-depth overview of blended learning as well as strategies to meet students' needs in blended learning environments. Christopher Arra's study of gender differences in cooperative learning in a psychology classroom offers insights into effective collaboration strategies to satisfy students' unique needs.

I am grateful for each of these wonderful contributions to *Inquiry*. They are thoughtful, well-composed research papers that demonstrate the vibrant, important conversations held across the VCCS as we constantly strive to provide high-quality education. I hope that our new redesign of articles to achieve a clean, simple aesthetic improves the readability of their works.

I am also grateful to our student contributor Ronald Bentley of Tidewater Community College. His photograph Albemarle Sunset caught my eye over a year ago, and it beautifully captures not only the mental vacation that we all could use but also the onset of what could be a much-needed normal summer.

My gratitude goes out to all who continue to support *Inquiry* by reading each issue of the journal. We are closing in on 40,000 total downloads since becoming a digital-only publication, which shows the impact of the work featured in *Inquiry* and its importance to higher education practitioners worldwide. We are incredibly grateful for the unwavering support of the VCCS as well as everyone who submits to the journal; we continue to publish in every issue works that were originally in need of major revisions, and we thank every author who takes the time to read the feedback of our editorial board.

Thank you most of all to the exceptional editorial board of *Inquiry*. They are integral to the success of this journal, and it is an honor to serve alongside them. I read all of their reviews of submitted manuscripts, and I am always impressed by how thorough, attentive, and constructive they are in their feedback. The publishing process can be daunting for writers, but our reviewers make the process one that is encouraging for any prospective *Inquiry* author. Both Elizabeth Benson and Bethany Arnold have been reviewing for *Inquiry* for at least 4 years, preceding my time as the Managing Editor, and they shape the standard of this journal with their incredible insights and advice as they build conversations with authors. Lisa Vaughn Jordan always closely engages writers by highlighting how carefully they address the target audience and craft the exigence of the argument. Our newest editorial board member Amy Anderson has quickly displayed her eye for effective research studies, substantiating each piece of commentary with details and examples.

If you are considering submitting to *Inquiry*, I encourage you to do so. I can assure you that our review team will take the time to immerse themselves in your manuscript and articulate what it may need to be a perfect fit for our journal. We accept submissions on a rolling basis, and you can always reach out to me or the editorial board if you have questions.

My sincerest thank you to all who read and support *Inquiry*.

Tom Geary
Managing Editor